

**Statement by Congressman Andy Kim (NJ03)  
before the Committee on House Administration  
March 8, 2023**

Dear Chairman Steil and Ranking Member Morelle:

Thank you for providing me the opportunity to testify before the Committee for today's Member Day hearing. We are now two months into a new Congress and we have not yet met the moment on an important task the American people sent us here to do—prohibiting officials across all three branches of government from owning individual stocks. This is neither a Democratic issue nor a Republican issue, but an issue that goes directly to the health and safety of our democracy. In fact, it is an issue that Speaker McCarthy himself has said needs to be addressed by Congress.

Americans have lost trust in their government and their representatives. We have a dangerous level of helplessness and apathy growing in our nation from people who feel that no matter what they do or who they vote for, their lives will not improve.

It's incumbent on us as elected leaders to work to restore Americans' trust in us, in our institutions, and in our constitution. The Constitution is a sacred document. If you're empowered by the people to hold a job whose job description is written in our Constitution, I believe you should have to hold yourself to the highest professional and ethical standards and leave no doubt that you are serving the American people and not working for political or personal benefit.

This week I introduced a bill that would be a first step in restoring people's faith in their democracy, restoring their trust in the elected leaders, and restoring the idea that the people's government works for the people.

My Restoring Trust in Public Servants Act would set one single standard across all three branches of the federal government – including Congress, the President, Vice President, and the Supreme Court– to prohibit ownership of individual stocks. We all swear an oath to the same constitution and we should have a single standard by which we show our commitment to that sacred document.

All public servants, at the highest levels, owe the American people their undivided attention and loyalty. Americans deserve to have complete faith in the people who choose to serve in our government without potential conflicts of interest.

I am encouraged by the growing consensus across the country and here in Congress that lawmakers should not be in a position to profit off of their service to the American people. I look forward to working with Americans and lawmakers from all sides of the political spectrum to tackle this challenge together and to restore Americans' trust in their government.

In addition to this legislative effort to restore trust by banning Members of Congress from owning individual stock, this Committee also holds within its power the ability to help restore trust between Representatives and their constituents by working with the House Ethics Committee to revise and update rules relating to community service, volunteerism, and informing constituents about resources available to them from non-profits, public health, and private entities.

Currently, Members of Congress are not allowed to volunteer our time with a charity or non-profit through our official office. In the aftermath of tragedies and disasters in our own community, we are not allowed to tell people where to donate food or resources to get urgent help to those in need. I respect and understand the need to restrict the use of official resources for solicitations, but also believe that I and other Members of Congress should be able to visit a soup kitchen and actually serve the homeless instead of merely giving remarks. Indeed, the March 16, 2020 Joint House Administration-Ethics Committee Guidance related to official communications about Coronavirus made clear that the relevant committees can create guardrails without totally prohibiting communications and the sharing of resources in times of emergency. I believe we can and should revise and update our rules to create such guardrails during non-emergencies as well.

Throughout American history, ordinary people have stepped up to accomplish extraordinary things in service to our country. From planting victory gardens and sewing homemade masks, to volunteer first responders spending their nights in the back of an ambulance, to the millions who joined the Civilian Conservation Corps in rebuilding our country after the Great Depression, Americans have always served one another, and I believe we must recommit ourselves to doing it again.

During the 117th Congress, dozens of bills were introduced by members on both sides of the aisle to promote and encourage service in our communities and to our country, including my own package of five bills to supercharge national service. I will continue to fiercely advocate for these legislative efforts, but I also encourage this Committee to revisit our own rules, handbook and guidelines so that Members may share resources without soliciting support, may work with non-profit partners in support of the public good, and may truly serve their constituents and their communities in both words *and* deeds. I believe doing so would be a huge step forward in restoring trust in government and elected officials.